DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 457 064 SO 031 525

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TITLE	Let's Sue Them All! The Byzantine Disaster. Grade 7 Lesson. Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World.
INSTITUTION	San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, CA.
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	38p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Schools of California Online Resources for Education, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, 601 North East Street, San Bernardino, CA 92410-3093. E-mail: webmaster@score.rims.k12.ca.us; Web site: http://score.rims.k12.ca.us. For full text: http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/activity/academy/index.htm.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Learner (051) -- Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Case Method (Teaching Technique); *Cultural Context; Curriculum Enrichment; *European History; Foreign Countries; Grade 7; Interdisciplinary Approach; Junior High Schools; *Middle Eastern History; Non Western Civilization; *Role Playing; Social Studies; Writing Assignments
IDENTIFIERS	*Ottoman Empire; *Roman Empire

ABSTRACT

Who is responsible for loss of life and property when one empire is conquered by another? It is the year 1473 A.D., 20 years after the fall of Constantinople. On May 29, 1453, the Eastern Roman Empire came to an end with the military takeover of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks. How could an empire cease to exist? What were the people in and around the area doing in its final days? History does not occur in a vacuum. What occurs in one place effects others and can be partially caused by the actions or non-actions of neighbors. What if there were modern insurance companies in existence at the time the Byzantine empire collapsed? Who could be proven guilty? In this lesson plan student teams, as insurance agents, represent people who existed during the fall of the Byzantine empire and are now either suing or being sued in connection with the empire's collapse. Students will research the 70 years leading up to the fall of Constantinople and the nature of the Ottoman takeover. Students are provided with background information, detailed instructions, on-line and print resources, and reflection questions. The teacher's notes describe the unit's purpose, suggest day-by-day teaching strategies, and provide preparation questions. (BT)

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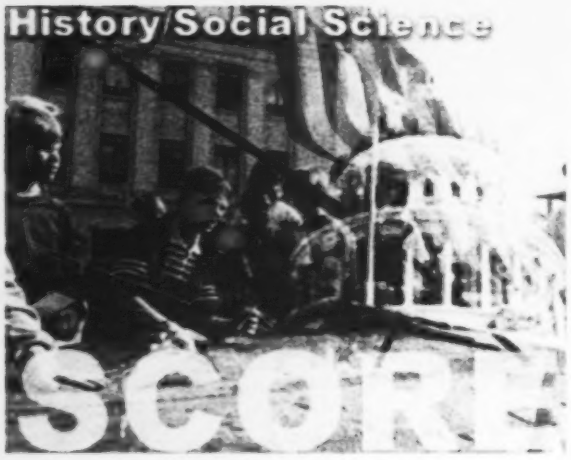

Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World

Let's Sue Them All!! The Byzantine Disaster

7th Grade Lesson by Gina Otto

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http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/activity/academy/index.html

1998

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Margaret Hill

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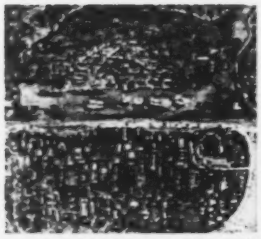
Teacher notes

Let's Sue Them All!!
The Byzantine Disaster



Who is responsible for loss of life and property when one empire is conquered by another? It is the year 1473 A.D., twenty years after the fall of Constantinople. You are an investigator for a participant in the conquest who is now being sued. Follow the trail of evidence from Rome to Genoa, Transylvania to Venice and present your case to the "Hanseatic Tribunal" in Copenhagen, Denmark. Let the evidence decide.

Have you ever wondered how an empire could cease to exist? Or what the people in and around the area were doing during its dying days? History does not occur in a vacuum. What happens in one place effects others and can be partially caused by the actions or non-actions of neighbors. What if there were "modern type" insurance companies in existence at the time that an empire collapsed? Could they be forced to pay claims for the "wrongful death" of a ruler or for loss of property (the empire, buildings, treasures looted)? And, what if survivors could sue the neighbors for damages. Could they prove any person, country or institution was at fault?

On May 29, 1453 the Eastern Roman Empire (also known as the Byzantine Empire or Byzantium) came to an end with the military takeover of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks. The Byzantine Empire had been the center of the Christian Eastern Orthodox Church. The Ottomans were Muslims.

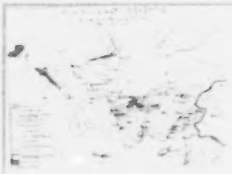
The Task

In this activity, you and your staff of advisors will represent people who existed during the years between 1380 and 1453. In most cases, your jobs will be to defend their actions against claims by the survivors of the Byzantine Empire for damages. In other words, prove that those you represent were not responsible for the fall of the Empire, and could not have saved it from the Ottomans. You will need to discover what happened during the 70 years leading up to the fall of Constantinople and how the Ottoman Empire took it over.

You will:

- Study historical maps and pictures, information by modern authors, dossiers (included), and a letter from the "Allworld Farmers Insurance Company".
- Do research about the specific history of your area and the people involved and take notes.
- Answer questions created to help organize your research.
- Create a map of the time period with your area as the central figure.
- Help to construct a class timeline.
- Write a position paper in order to help a tribunal decide who, if anyone, should be responsible for paying the claims for loss of life and property.
- Prepare for and testify in front of a tribunal, first stating your position, then answering questions put to you by members of the tribunal or others.
    - You may use charts, graphs, the class timeline, maps, witnesses etc. to help present your case.

Allworld Farmers Insurance



Hanseatic Division

Home Offices:

Copenhagen, Denmark

October 12, 1472

To: English King, French King, Pope, Doge of Venice, Rul
King of Hungary, King of Bulgaria, Ottoman Sultan,

From: Claims Department

You are hereby notified that Sophia Palaeologus, wife of Ivan III (grand prince of Moscow and Vladimir), and niece of the late Constantine XI Palaeologus, filed a claim as the beneficiary of Constantine XI Palaeologus, for collection of "life insurance" and "property" insurance for the loss of the Byzantine Empire. Both claims were investigated in our Novgorod offices and rejected for the following reasons:

- the cause of death of Constantine XI was due to his suicidal behavior and the policy does not pay for suicide.
- the loss of the Byzantine Empire was due to neglect, misadventure, weather conditions and lack of leadership and the insurance policy specifically excludes these causes.
- the loss was due in part to lack of due care and caution by Christian Western European "countries" i.e. England, France, Bulgaria, Serbia, Venice, Genoa and Hungary and the company feels that these areas should pay the damages.
- the loss was due in part to the neglect by the Pope in Rome and the Church should pay.
- the loss was due to inadequate planning for the defense of Constantinople, the Byzantine capital, making the Palaeologus family responsible.
- the loss was due to the Kuwae Volcano which brought about weather changes interpreted as signs of God's anger, causing the people to believe they were beaten.
- the loss was the obvious responsibility of the Ottoman Turks led by Mehmed II and they should pay damages.
- the Empire was broke, had no assets and had really ceased to exist before the fall of Constantinople, thus there was no loss.

Sophia Palaeologus and her husband, Ivan III, are demanding that the Hanseatic Tribunal:

1) review our refusal to pay
2) assess damages against those responsible for the loss

You are hereby notified that you are to present your side of the case on October 12, 1473, after which time the Tribunal may assess blame and decide if the insurance company is liable, or if anyone else is liable, and assess reasonable damages.

The Process

Everyone will be assigned to a "boss" they represent and will investigate for. You will

investigate the role your "boss" played in the occurrences between 1370 and 1453 and present your side of the story to the Hanseatic Tribunal for its decision on who should pay, if anyone.

Step 1. Decide who will be: 1] the leader or coordinator of your delegation, 2] the cartographer or map maker, 3] the scribe or writer, 4] the historian or researcher and 5] the spokesman and presenter to the Hanseatic Tribunal. A person may have more than one job or jobs may be shared.

Step 2. Everyone will read the letter from the Insurance Company to decide what charges you are being asked to defend. There may be clues for you to watch for. Take notes. Reread the letter as you search for information.

Step 3. Everyone will read the Short Histories of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, the Volcano Information and the final speech of Constantine XI to his troops in May of 1453 written below; and take notes.

Step 4. The Historian will now access up to three different Internet Links under "General History of the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman Turks", while the rest of the group searches for additional information in textbooks and on dossiers provided. Everyone will take notes. The focus should be the years 1380 to 1453. The group will meet together to compare notes and edit them into one document.

Step 5. The Cartographer will locate and share historical maps of the area during the time period specified (1380 to 1453) found in your textbook, historical atlases, encyclopedias, and from the "Maps and Pictures".

Step 6. After studying the historical maps and the general information, the Cartographer will, create a historical map of the area during the time period specified, 1380 to 1453. Your area should be the center of attention on the map. The map should show, in some way, the answers to the following questions for the time period of your map. Be sure to include a key and a date. When the map is completed, everyone in your group should answer, on a piece of paper, the following questions. **(Members of the Palaeologus Family and the Ottoman Turks please skip to the Alternative Steps below.)**

1. According to the map, how close to Constantinople and the Turks are you?
2. Are you, or have you been in danger from Ottoman attack or take over?
3. During the time period shown, did the Ottoman Turks get closer to you? Or take you over?
4. Did you or do you have any economic interest in Constantinople? If so, what?
5. Did you have any religious interest in Constantinople? If so what?

Be sure to see advice for more information on creating your map. (Link to page 5)

Step 7. There are page(s) below called dossier pages. The information on them is in no specific chronological order. While your Historian is accessing some links to identify the

name of your **specific** "boss", everybody else should be reading the dossier pages provided. Between the dossier pages and the Internet Links, you should be able to discover what your "boss" was doing during the particular time period.

- DOSSIER PARAPHRASED FROM NUMBERED SOURCES

Step 8. Organize all the information you have now gathered into chronological or subject order. Before you discard information you feel is duplication and any information you may feel is unnecessary, everyone will answer the following questions on their own piece of paper:

1. Who is the leader of your area today (1473)?
2. Who was the leader of your area during the crucial 10 years leading up to the fall of Constantinople?
3. Were you asked to help the Byzantine Empire anytime between 1380 and 1453?
    1. If yes, when did this (these) request(s) occur and how did you respond?
    2. Was any specific person involved in the decision?
    3. What were the reason(s) the decision(s) were made to help or not help the Emperor?
    4. What were the results of your action(s)?
4. Did either Battle of Kossovo (1389 or 1448) effect you in any way? How?
5. Did the Battle of Varna effect you in any way? How?
6. Were you asked to help after 1448? If so, what was your response? Why? What result did your actions, or lack of action, have?
7. Did the invention of gun powder or the introduction of cannon effect the final outcome?

Step 9. Everyone make their own list of 5 important events, then as a group decide on the 10 most important events you think should be included on a timeline of the period. The Scribe will write them down and make illustrations for at least 3 of them and then be sure to have them placed on the timeline.

Step 10. The representatives of the Palaeologus family or a volunteer, will create a large class timeline. When it is your turn and you have your information ready, the Scribe will add your part of the story to the timeline using words and pictures. The timeline should start in 1370 and go to 1470.

Step 11. Using all the information you have gathered, your group will discuss, argue and brainstorm what your testimony before the Tribunal will be. You'll want to justify your actions, deny responsibility if you can, and put the blame on someone or something else. You may wish to check the page which lists observations about the empire. Be sure to list examples to justify your position. Your scribe will need to write your testimony down into a two page position paper, using your examples to prove your case.

Step 12. Be sure your Spokesperson understands your defense/point of view. Have your Spokesperson practice the testimony you wish to present to the Tribunal. Testimony should

be about 5-10 minutes. In your research you may discover information about what others may testify to, which will be helpful when you present your 1-2 minute rebuttal or answer questions that may be put to you by the Tribunal or other groups after all testimony is completed.

Alternative Step 6

1. **Representatives of the Byzantine Empire (Palaeologus family)** - Your map should be of the city of Constantinople, showing how well it was built to withstand attack. Everyone will write an explanation proving that you could have lasted many years more with outside help.
2. **Representatives of the Ottoman Sultan** - everyone will use your map to write an explanation proving that you were predestined to takeover the Byzantine Empire. Your map may be of Constantinople and your battle strategy, or of the takeover of the entire empire.

Alternative Step 7.

1. There are pages below called dossier pages. The information on them is in no specific chronological order. While your Historian is accessing some links to identify the name of your specific "boss", everybody else should be reading the dossier pages provided. Between the dossier pages and the Internet Links, you should be able to discover what the Sultan or Emperor was doing during the particular time period.

Alternative Step 8

1. **Representatives of the Byzantine Empire (Palaeologus family)** - everyone should write down the specific times you asked for help 1380 to 1448 and the response, and what you did 1448 to 1453 to save yourself. Be sure to mention the use of cannon by the Ottomans and explain who Constantine was and why he would not leave the city. You may wish to evaluate information about how Constantinople was built to withstand attack and why it didn't.
2. **Representatives of the Ottoman Sultan** - everyone should write down the important battles between 1380 and 1448 and their outcomes. Tell about Mehmed and explain exactly why he decided to take the city in 1453. Be sure to include the offer to Constantine to surrender and what happened at the end.

Alternative Step 9

1. **The representatives of the Byzantine Empire (Palaeologus family)** will design a large classroom timeline (1380 to 1453) using butcher paper. List at least 5 different times you asked for help on the timeline. Remember all the other groups will be adding to the timeline so it needs to be big enough for everyone to write their information down. You only need to put Byzantine things down.
2. **The Representatives of the Ottoman Sultan** - The representatives of the Palaeologus family will have started to create a large class timeline. When it is your

turn and you have your information ready, either the Scribe or Historian will add your part of the story to the timeline (at least ten events). You need to only put Ottoman history down. You may use words and pictures.

Alternative Step 10

1. **Palaeologus Family** - Using all the information you have gathered, all the questions you have answered, your map, and your notes, your group will discuss, argue and brainstorm what your testimony before the Tribunal will be. Tell the story of what happened to you, what you did to stop it, who you called for help and how that worked out, and why you think the others should be blamed for your loss.
2. **Ottoman Turks** -- using all the information you have gathered, all the questions you have answered, your map and your notes, discuss, argue and brainstorm what your testimony before the Tribunal will be. Tell how you conquered the Byzantine Empire piece by piece, defeating all armies, the treaties you made, the offers you made to Constantine XI, etc. and justify your takeover of the city.

Alternative Step 11

1. Be sure your Spokesperson understands your defense/point of view. Have your Spokesperson practice the testimony you wish to present to the Tribunal. Testimony should be five to ten minutes. In your research you may discover information about what others may testify to, which will be helpful in answering questions that may be put to you by the Tribunal or other groups after all testimony is completed.

Learning Advice

Stay organized and on task. Be sure to:

1. Check the insurance letter many times to make sure you are prepared to answer the charges against your boss and perhaps shift the blame to someone else.
2. Be sure to identify who the person you represent is. For example Nicholas V was dead, who would have received the letter dated 1472?
3. Be sure to identify the people who played a major role in the events. Example, what Pope called for a new Crusade in 1440? Who was the Emperor at that time? The Sultan of the Ottomans?
4. Have a dictionary on hand so you can look up any word or words you do not understand in the text.
5. Have your social studies textbook in front of you to access maps not available in the handouts (dossiers) included here, or on the Internet.
6. Integrate the information you find in at least 4 maps of the time period. Be sure to create a key and date your map.
7. Highlight the dossier ten, cut-up the sections that pertain to you and sort them manually into chronological order. If more than one date appears in a section, cut-up

the paragraph in order to place the events in the correct order.
8. Organize the other information you locate on the Internet and put it together with the cut-up pieces of the dossier.
9. Prioritize what you think the most important events are and, after a group discussion, you may wish to discard unimportant information.
10. Use the timeline, map and other information to explain your testimony.
11. Remember other members of the group may complete a task set up for someone who is busy, absent, etc.
12. Create an informative presentation. Be sure you understand and can explain your view of what the damages may or may not be and who you think is responsible.
13. The timeline should be made in pieces or segments. Members of the **Byzantine group** should check with the teacher for supplies and further advice on the design of the timeline.

Evaluation

The class will create a rubric for grading this activity. Each individual will be responsible for his/her job, and, based on a 5 point scale, with 5 being the top and 1 being the score for a non-worker, will be evaluated by other group members for an individual grade. The presentation before the Tribunal will be graded by a student created rubric which must include evaluation of preparation, validity of argument, amount of research used, use of visuals and attention to detail. Appropriate behavior during the testimony may also be included as part of the rubric.

Reflection

The students will reflect on this activity when it is completed by writing an essay with a minimum of one and one half pages which answers the following questions:

1. Did you feel your side had adequate sources and an equal chance to present its case?
2. What information that you learned was the most interesting part of this activity?
3. What part of this activity did you find the hardest to do?
4. If you were doing this activity again, what would you do differently?
5. The United States is always being asked to: 1) help a government, oppressed people and starving or ill populations; 2) send troops to put down rebellions, stop attacks or protect weaker countries; and 3) lead other governments in trade stoppages, boycotts of goods and embargoes. If the United States existed in 1453, what do you think the U.S. would have done if asked for help from Constantine? Do you need any other information to answer this question? If so, what?

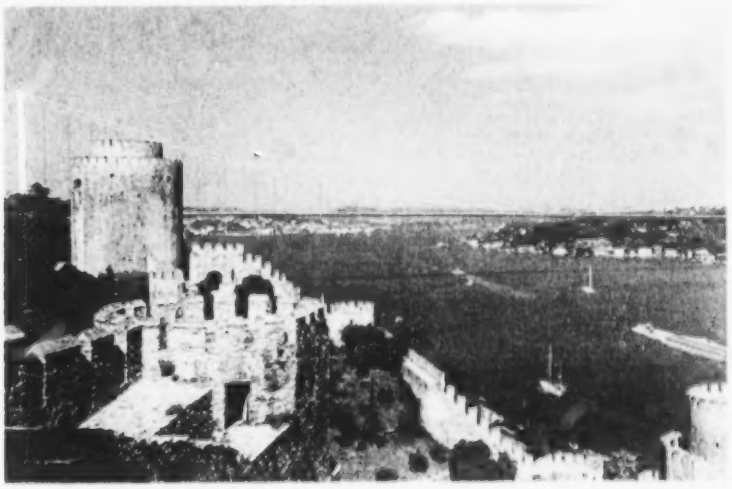
Conclusion

In our lifetime there exists international organizations (United Nations, World Court, NATO) for areas having problems to air their grievances. These did not exist in 1453. Nor did insurance companies insure the lives of rulers or property of empires. There were no lawsuits of the kind we have been working on here, since decisions about who was to blame for any wrong rested with the rulers of the various areas and the laws which differed from place to place.

As the times changed, the ideas of nation, government and the size of the known world changed too. Monarchies became strong then weak. Some governments began to give guarantees to the people they governed, empires were created and destroyed and political world maps changed with each succeeding year.

Our political maps have changed drastically even in the past 10 years, and are changing still, as people choose their own destinies. And, in the world of today, it is possible, and sometimes highly probable, that unlike the 1400s:

- Uninvolved troops can be and have been sent to areas under attack from inside and out in order to protect the people of the area.
- Attempts can be made to help two sides in a conflict settle their disputes peacefully through arbitration and third party involvement.
- When fighting does take place there are organizations that can be called upon to help end the conflict as quickly as possible and/or give aid and comfort to the victims.
- As long as the peace process is in place, dangerous situations can be defused and the world can become a better place in which to live.



Materials and Resources

Materials: Large map of Europe, Historical Atlases, Encyclopedias, butcher paper, markers, World History Textbooks, and the General Information, Short Histories and dossiers written below for each group being asked to present testimony before the Hanseatic Tribunal.

Resources: Internet links
General Lists

Chronological list of Popes by name only.

http://www.catholic.org/prayer/popes.html

Alphabetical list of Popes with information

http://www.knight.org/advent/

Chronological list of Rulers including Serbia, Croatia, Ottomans, Venice, Genoa, Albania, France, England etc. by name only - Click to appropriate area & place.

http://www.imperium.net/~obsidian/regindex.html#Indices

Chronological list and pictures of Kings/Queens of France and England

http://haas.berkeley.edu/~schwarz/hundred/history.htm

Other sources for battles not already mentioned in general history

Varna also mentioned in the following sources:

http://www.lib.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/lecture3.html

http://www.yugoslavia.com/library/Facts/FACTS04.htm

http://www.thehistorynet.com/MilitaryHistory/articles/08965_text.htm

http://www.bulgaria.com/varna/index.html

http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~erica67/drac.txt

http://www.bnf.fr/enluminures/images/jpeg/i3_0091.jpg Picture of Battle, 1396

Kosovo (Kossovo) also mentioned in the following sources:

http://www.txdirect.net/users/rrichard/militar3.htm

http://www.yugoslavia.com/Library/Serbia/doc5.htm

http://www.lib.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/lecture3.html

http://www.sta.cathedral.org/~wtyree/GeoWorld/HKosovo.html

http://www.thehistorynet.com/MilitaryHistory/articles/08965_text.htm

Other Websites for Venice and/or Genoa

All about Serbia and Venice

http://www.montenegro.org/crnojev.html

History of Venice

http://www.eirias.demon.co.uk/trs/rarsm/RArsM-VenRAM.html

How the Venetians fortified Cyprus after the fall of Constantinople against modern Turkish warfare Venice and Cyprus.

http://www.cypnet.com/.ncyprus/venedik.html

Information about the Chioggia Wars between Genoa and Venice 1253-1381 which explains the 1380-1450 rivalry

http://www.best.com/~miket/chioggia.html

Already listed in General History it tells how Genoa got Galata. Click to "Istanbul During the Byzantine Period"

http://www.boun.edu.tr/istanbul/history.html

Where was Venice in 1451-52?

http://www.idbsu.edu:80/courses/hy309/docs/burckhardt/1-9.html

Websites for Hungary

This is a great site for the history of Hungary and mention of Serbia and Bulgaria. Also mention of Dracula, Hunyadi, Kosovo

http://www.net.hu/corvinus/whirlw/whirlw13.html

The Siege of Belgrade, 1456 and prior history explained. Why did peasants arm against their rulers in 1437-38? Who helped fight the Turks in 1456? And who was Hunyadi?

http://www.thehistorynet.com/MilitaryHistory/articles/08965_text.htm

How Murad II abandoned Wallachia to Hungary, signed a treaty which is broken and wins at Varna

http://ancientworld.simplenet.com/chapter12/index.html

Hunyadi 1/2 way down the page

http://www.msstate.edu/Archives/History/hungary/Lazar/6.htm

Sigismund, Murad, no one to take over the throne, Hunyadi, etc. - 1/2 way down the page

http://www.msstate.edu/Archives/History/hungary/macartney/3.html

Hunyadi - neat map, good information but needs to be read from bottom to top

http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/spalffy/h_15.htm

Websites for Serbia/Bulgaria

About Serbia before and after its fall to the Ottoman Turks w/pictures

http://www.yugoslavia.com/Library/Facts/FACTS04.htm

Battle of Varna

http://www.bulgaria.com/varna/index.html

History of Bulgaria - Bulgaria would have liked to conquer the Byzantine Empire, while being conquered themselves

- http://www.cunet.bg/books/history/

While this is a Hungarian site, there is mention of Serbia and Bulgaria several times

http://www.net.hu/corvinus/whirlw/whirlw13.html

Tells of Serbia's Historic past with pictures - what it was like before 1380

http://www.yugoslavia.com/Library/Facts/FACTS03.htm

A paragraph about effect of Kossovo and Serbian defeat

http://www.lib.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/lecture3.html

Battle of Kosovo, death of Murat, painting of battle of Kosovo and view of bridge

http://www.yugoslavia.com/Library/Serbia/doc5.htm

About Despot Stefan Lazarevic and Serbia's Prominence

http://suc.suc.org/culture/history/Medieval_Ornaments/present/Ste_Laz_Resava.html

http://suc.suc.org/culture/history/Medieval_Ornaments/present/Ste_Laz_Rudenica.htn

Information about Kosovo, 1390

http://www.sta.cathedral.org/~wtyree/GeoWorld/HKosovo.html

Websites for Albania

Albania, Byzantium and the Ottomans. Scan down to "Decline of Byzantium." Reference to Skanderbeg

http://www.albania.co.uk./main/history.html

About Hunyadi helping Skanderbeg

http://www.net.hu/corvinus/whirlw/whirlw13.html

Websites for Dracula

Military history

http://www.thehistorynet.com/MilitaryHistory/articles/08965_text.htm

Wallachia and Dracula

http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~erica67/drac.txt

Information about Vlad the Dragon sending his son as hostage to the Sultan 1430s

http://www.net.hu/corvinus/whirlw/whirlw13.html

Websites for France and England & 100 Years War

http://www.vacation.forthnet.gr/history14.html

http://haas.berkeley.edu/~schwarz/hundred/history.htm

http://www.idbsu.edu/courses/hy309/topics/100yw/100yw.timeline.html

Websites for Church/Pope

Did the church help? See last two paragraphs at the bottom of the page

http://www.knight.org/advent/cathen/03096a.htm

One of the better sites about Crusades in the 15th Century - spellings different from other pages

http://www.knight.org/advent/cathen/04543c.htm#IX

How Calixtus tried to save Christendom from the Turks after the Fall of Constantinople

http://www.knight.org/advent/Popes/ppcl03.htm

Websites for Effects of Volcano

Info about Kuwae - article

http://hubcap.clemson.edu/~aozkul/1453.txt

Report of Kuwae from JPL

http://www2.jpl.nasa.gov/files/releases/hebrides.txt

Resources: Bibliography of Books and Magazines

1. Armento, Beverly J. and others. Across the Centuries. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991. Good maps

2. Arnott, Peter. The Byzantines. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973. Another version of Barbaro's eyewitness report starting March, 1452 and reports of blockade runners and the withdrawal of foreigners from the city in 1453.

3. Franzius, Enno. History of the Byzantine Empire. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1967. This had great information about the impoverishment of the Empire in the last centuries.

4. Guerdan, Rene. Byzantium, Its Triumphs and Tragedy. New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1957. Numerous eyewitness accounts including Barbaro.

5. Nicol, Donald. M. The Immortal Emperor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Great eyewitness accounts, original pictures especially of Mehmed and Constantine, translation of Constantine's final speech to the troops, and the last days of the empire.

6. Norwich, John Julius. Byzantium: the Decline and Fall. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996. This is the latest, most definitive source available today. It is one of three volumes and can also be found in a one volume concise edition. Much ado about the omens in May, 1453.

7. Oman, C. W. The Byzantine Empire. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892. Another viewpoint of the final 70 yrs.

8. Severy, Merle. "The Byzantine Empire Rome of the East." National Geographic. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, December, 1983, pp. 709-737. Has wonderful maps of the Byzantine World and the city of Constantinople before the takeover with a key to buildings and a great summary of how life was lived in the city which was different from the West. Greeks still look to a future with Constantinople returned, according to this article.

9. Sherrard, Philip. Byzantium. New York: Time Incorporated, 1966. Probably the best secondary source for pictures and information about the early empire. Anyone interested in military tactics would find the information about the siege and methods of fighting very

interesting.

10. Simarski, Lynn Tea. "Constantinople's Volcanic Twilight." Aramco World. November/December, 1996.

11. Sphrantzes, George. The Fall of the Byzantine Empire. Translated by Marios Philippides. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980. Sphrantzes lived in Constantinople at the time of the siege, was captured and later ransomed. His diaries are the best primary sources of information about the Empire from 1401 to 1477, since he served at least three emperors and witnessed Constantine's death.

12. Vryonis, Speros, Jr., Byzantium and Europe. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1967. Contained good pictures and great information about the empire before its collapse.

Short History of the Roman Empire in the East 476 to 1380

1. In 476 Rome was taken by the Goths and the Byzantine Emperor became the head of both the government and the Christian religion in the east. He claimed his authority from God and ruled with the advice of advisors and officials.
2. Byzantium became the center of world trade -- furs, hides, grain and wine from the Black Sea, spices, gems and silk from Arabia and ivory and slaves from Africa.
3. Constantinople had money, people (1 million in 1000 A.D.), schools where they studied Greek and Roman writers, and domed churches.
4. The Church at Constantinople was dominated by the Bishop who clashed with the Pope in Rome, especially when Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor. After all there was already an emperor in Constantinople.
5. While Charlemagne could barely write his name, and only churchmen could read, Byzantine Emperors were scholars.
6. While in the west, trial was by ordeal, Constantinople had the foundation of Roman law which is part of the laws of the continent of Europe today.
7. A split between the churches occurred in 1054.
8. In 1071 Seljuk Turks attacked and won a battle at Manzikert. By 1081 more land had been lost to them. (Nicaea was only 200 miles away).
9. The Byzantine Emperor asked for help from the West and the first of many crusades was called for by the Pope in 1096.
10. The 4th Crusade ended in 1204 with the looting and takeover of Constantinople by Genoese and Venetian Crusaders, who looted the city and stayed until 1261.
11. After 1261, even though a Palaeologus Emperor was now on the throne, the Venetians and Genoese had a strangle hold on its trade.
12. In 1348 the Plague struck Europe, the Mongols had pushed the Ottoman Turks west and Byzantine was under attack again.

Short History of the Ottomans

1. In the 1300s Osmanlis (Ottomans) were driven west by the Mongols.
2. They took Bursa in 1326 and it became the Capital of the Osmanli (Ottomans).
3. They first settled in Europe in 1354 when they took Gallipoli.
4. After the battle of Kossovo in 1389, Serbia ceased to be an independent state.
5. An attack by Timur the Lame (Mongol) put pressure on the Ottomans in the east and only Timur's death and the withdrawal of the Mongols to Samarkand saved them from defeat in 1400-1403.
6. The Ottomans were ruled by a Sultan with a grand vizier and a council.
7. Soldiers came from conquered lands. Young boys were taken hostage, converted to Islam and made into soldiers (Janissaries) or government officials.
8. The Sultans killed off their brothers, and the wives and children of their brothers, when they took office so there would be no claims to the throne.
9. The Ottomans slowly took Byzantine land and tried 7 times to capture Constantinople before 1453.

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VOLCANO INFORMATION

"By 1453, triple-walled Constantinople, one of the most coveted and magnificent cities in the world, had stood watch over the Bosporus for 2100 years. For the last 1100 of these, it had been the capital of the Byzantine Empire, crown of the Eastern Christian world and an international center of wealth, beauty, power and commerce. Constantinople was named in the fourth century for the reigning Roman emperor, Constantine the Great; in antiquity the city was known as Byzantium, and today it is called Istanbul."

"Also by 1453, Constantinople had been besieged many times--by Persians, Avars, Arabs (twice), Bulgars, Russians (three times) and Pechenegs. During the Byzantine era, it had been conquered only once--in 1204, by soldiers of the Fourth Crusade. The city served as the capital of the Crusaders' short-lived Latin kingdom until it was recaptured by the Byzantines in 1261."

"And by 1453, the Byzantine Empire had been shrinking steadily for some 400 years, due to both internal political strife and military pressure from rival powers of both East and West. The capital city had suffered along with the rest of the empire. By 1453, Constantinople's population, once a million strong, had shrunk to a mere tenth of that. Although its historic luster had been tarnished, Constantinople, the gateway to Europe, was nevertheless an alluring military objective for the Ottoman Turks as they consolidated their hold in Asia Minor and Eastern Europe."

"The Muslim Turks had first crossed into Europe a century earlier, invited by a pretender to the Byzantine throne who needed Turkish troops to enforce his claim. A decade later, in 1354, the Ottomans established a permanent presence in Europe, taking advantage of a devastating earthquake in Thrace to cross the Hellespont, occupy the ruined city of Gallipoli and rebuild it into a garrison town. From there, the Turks spread out into other parts of Thrace. In 1377, their forces defeated a large Serbian army on the Maritsa River, paving the way for future victories in Macedonia, Serbia and Greece. The second most important city of the Byzantine Empire, Thessalonica, fell to the Ottomans in 1430."

"Despite several military assaults on Constantinople itself, Ottoman efforts to wrest the capital from Byzantine control proved unsuccessful. According to an ancient belief popular with the inhabitants of the city, Constantinople would fall only when the moon gave a sign."

"During the Byzantine capital's waning days, in May of 1453, the ancient myth appeared to come true. As the city lay besieged by the forces of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II, the moon went into a long and dark eclipse. Constantinople's Byzantine defenders were filled with paralyzing despair; outside the walls, Ottoman troops enjoyed cautious hope."

"Constantinople's final days under Byzantine rule witnessed still other unusual, seemingly apocalyptic occurrences: abnormally violent weather, lurid sunsets and sunrises, and flickering lights visible in the night sky. All were metaphysically interpreted as portents of a

great change in the world order."

"Today, 500 years later, an American astronomer has proposed that a volcanic eruption in the South Pacific--half a world away from the Byzantine Empire--may have been powerful enough to darken the skies over Constantinople and to produce the other curious phenomena that coincided with the city's historic change of power. Kevin Pang, formerly of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, points to the volcano Kuwae, which erupted in the New Hebrides, 1900 kilometers (1200 miles) east of Australia. Although the date of the blast is not certain, much evidence points to the year 1453."

"... The volcanic cloud from Kuwae, Pang hypothesizes, would have shrouded the earth thickly enough to darken the moon above Constantinople beyond the usual, dulled-copper appearance of a lunar eclipse. Similarly, the cloud of suspended particles could be responsible for the unseasonably cold weather, with rain and snow, and for the bizarre optical effects reported by various chroniclers, all of which are phenomena now known to be associated with volcanic eruptions. But Kuwae remains unique, says Pang, because it appears to have thrown its volcanic veil over one of the great turning points of world history."

"By the time Mehmet II's campaign to conquer Constantinople began, in the spring of 1453, the Ottomans had already reduced the ailing Byzantine Empire to fragments. Mehmet, barely 21, had succeeded his father Murat II as sultan just two years earlier. Intelligent and inquisitive, Mehmet had been an assiduous student of philosophy, science and the governmental arts. The Byzantines, however, underestimated the young sultan's talents and resolve. They failed to grasp the seriousness of his commitment, dating from the moment of his father's death, to capture Constantinople and make that city the crowning jewel of the expanding Ottoman Empire."

Reprinted with permission from "Constantinople's Volcanic Twilight," Written by Lynn Teo Simarski in Aramco World, November/December, 1996, pages 8-15.

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Constantine's Final Speech to Constantinople's Defenders

"Gentlemen, illustrious captains of the army, and our most Christian comrades in arms: we now see the hour of battle approaching. I have therefore elected to assemble you here to make it clear that you must stand together with firmer resolution than ever. You have always fought with glory against the enemies of Christ. Now the defense of your fatherland and of the city known the world over, which the infidel and evil Turks have been besieging for two and fifty days, is committed to your lofty spirits. Be not afraid because the walls have been worn down by the enemy's battering. For your strength lies in the protection of God....

You are aware that the impious and infidel enemy has disturbed the peace unjustly. He has violated the oath and treaty that he made with us; he has slaughtered our farmers at harvest time; he has erected a fortress on the Propontis as it were to devour the Christians; he has encircled Galata under a pretense of peace. Now he threatens to capture the city of Constantine the Great, your fatherland, the place of ready refuge for all Christians, the guardian of all Greeks....

Lift high your spirits now for battle. You, my comrades in arms, obey the commands of your leaders in the knowledge that this is the day of your glory--a day in which, if you shed but a drop of blood, you will win for yourselves crowns of martyrdom and eternal fame."

Quoted in *The Immortal Emperor* by Donald Nicol as quoted by E. Gibbons in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London: 1900, as witnessed by George Sphrantzes and quoted as part of Sphrantzes' memoirs in Melissenos

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General History of Byzantine Empire and/or Rise of Ottoman Turks

The Shining Fortress - a history of Byzantium. Use this first!! The first section has Byzantine contributions, why the location was chosen and how the city was built. The last sections tell about how Venice helped to sack it in 1204 and about the last two centuries, including information on the Ottomans

http://www.serve.com/byzance/

The History of the Byzantine Empire tells the way the Empire was ruled after the Crusades and what survived after 1453. There are three maps of the Empire at different times to 1350. Also click on The Fall of Constantinople at the top and see a great map of Constantinople showing the battle. Day to day detail of the city's last days and info on Venice and Varna

http://web.nps.navy.mil/~fapapoul/history/byzemp.html

Muslim view of the battle for Constantinople, click on Liberation of Constantinople under Islamic History

http://www.islam.org.au/articles/14/consta.htm

Chronology of History of the Middle Ages - events listed, including annotated military history

http://www.txdirect.net/users/rrichard/militar3.htm

Ottoman history

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/~n328911/history.html

Chronological History of the Eastern Empire from 476 to 1453

http://www.greece.org/Romiosini/chronology.html

Fall of Constantinople and what it meant to Hungary

http://www.thehistorynet.com/MilitaryHistory/articles/08965_text.htm

History of "Istanbul During the Byzantine Period" when it was Constantinople. Great info on the disrepair and building of Galata by Genoa. Click on hypertext to scroll down. . http://www.boun.edu.tr/istanbul/history.html#byzant

History of Greece and the Ottomans. "Soon a new power..."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

http://www.vacation.forthnet.gr/history14.html

Information on the death of Constantine XI and short blow by blow of siege and fall & a poem. http://www.bcl.net/~nikolai/stove/constantinos.html

History about Constantinople, what it was really like and what caused it to fall. http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5972/Constantinople.html

Population of major cities from 528 AD to 1483. Constantinople had less than 23,000 in 1483. http://scholar.chem.nyu.edu/~tekpages/urbanpop.html

Links to all types of info and tells what Mehmed did after he defeated the Byzantines (at the bottom of the page).
http://www.alliance.net/~peter/links.htm

A real brief history of the Ottoman conquest and result of the fall--"scholars moved"
http://www.hyperhistory.com/online_n2/civil_n2/histscript5_n2/fall_const1.html

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Maps and Pictures

Miniature pictures that can be blown up into large size pictures. **Map drawing of Constantinople and Galata is the best!! And a must have.**
http://www.cs.umd.edu/users/kandogan/EEA/Art/Miniature/miniature.html

Maps of Central Europe 980-1871 - Great Historical Maps of England, France, Hungary, Venice, Genoa, Serbia Print sideways and in color!! Must have
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/historical/Central_Europe.html

Maps of South Eastern Europe 900 to 1881 - Great Historical Maps of Serbia, Hungary,, Venice, Danube Area, Moldavia, Genoese territory, Croatia, Wallachia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Ottoman Empire, Byzantine Empire, Varna, Thessalonika, Transylvania **Print sideways and in color!! Must have**
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/historical/se_europe.html

Great map of Ottoman Empire 1400 to 1551 - helpful for history

http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~rs143/ottoma.jpg

Map of the Battle of Constantinople, 1453, with arrows, locations of walls and gates, etc. http://web.nps.navy.mil/~fapapoul/history/pics/fall.jpg

Sources of maps of cities all over the world - Istanbul, Venice, Genoa etc.

http://mahogany.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/map_sites/cities_sites.html

Islamic world of 1300 - Note that there are no Ottomans on this map.

http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~rs143/map5.jpg

Islamic world of 1500

http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~rs143/map6.jpg

Huge present day map of Istanbul showing Galata

http://www.city.net/countries/turkey/istanbul/maps/istbul.html

A picture of the Fall of Constantinople in 1453.

http://www.greece.org/Romiosini/fall.html

Picture of the Golden Horn

http://www.grsd.k12.mi.us:8000/~s71sdunlop/byzantine/wake.jpg

Maps and pictures of the 100 Years War

http://haas.berkeley.edu/~schwarz/hundred/history.htm

http://www.bnf.fr/enluminures/themes/t_1st_1_02/a102_007.htm

http://www.bnf.fr/enluminures/texte/atx2_02.htm

http://www.bnf.fr/enluminures/images/jpeg/i3_0091.jpg

Clickable and printable maps, and timeline

http://www.hyperhistory.com/online_n2/History_n2/a.html

Pictures of Serbian History

http://www.yugoslavia.com/Library/Facts/FACTS04.htm **(Great)**

http://suc.suc.org/culture/history/Medieval_Ornaments/present/Ste_Laz_Resava.html

http://suc.suc.org/culture/history/Medieval_Ornaments/present/Ste_Laz_Rudenica.htm

Picture of Siege of Constantinople in 1204

http://www.bnf.fr/enluminures/images/jpeg/i1_0087.jpg

Portraits of the Sultans

http://www.ee.bilkent.edu.tr/~history/portraits.html

Picture of Fall of Constantinople

http://www.greekconnection.com/cgi-local/dbbooks.pl/page/~/catalog/books/bk8320.

Picture which is a great example of what the Turkish Armada would have looked like outside the walls of Constantinople

gopher://ithaki.servicenet.ariadnet.gr:70/I9/HELLENIC_CIVILIZATION/MUSEUM

Picture of Janos Hunyadi

http://www.idg.hu/expo/hosok_tere/gero/Hunyadi.html

Great map of Hungary and the area around it in Middle Ages on the front page of the site http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/spalffy/hungary.htm

Picture of Murad battling Serbs

http://www.bnf.fr/enluminures/images/jpeg/i3_0054.jpg

Picture of Battle of Kosovo and view of Bridge

http://www.yugoslavia.com/Library/Serbia/doc5.htm

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Three Genoese ships, chartered by the Pope, reached the city on April 11, 1453, being delayed by weather. (6)

In 1452 Byzantium counted on the West. If only the Pope, or Venice, or Genoa would send a fleet, the Infidels would have to withdraw. Neither of these great republics would want to see the Straits fall under the control of the Sultan; and the Pope could not want a victory of the Crescent over the Cross. (4)

In 1452, the Pope could not muster any help. The Duke of Burgundy was not interested in helping, France and England were recovering from the 100 Years War, Portugal and Castile were involved in Crusades of their own, and the Kings of Scotland and Scandinavia knew nothing and could care less. (6)

In November, 1423, Emperor Manuel's son, John VIII, went to look for help from the western Christian world. He set out for Venice and Hungary. While he was gone, his brother Constantine, the regent, immediately arranged a new peace treaty with Sultan Murad, signed on February 22, 1424. (5)

Mehmed, the new Sultan was 19 years old in 1451. Within months he made treaties with John Hunyadi of Hungary, George Brankovich of Serbia, the Doge of Venice, the Prince of Wallachia, and the Genoese lords, and swore to live at peace with Constantine. But then after putting down an uprising, Mehmed decided to build forts on both sides of the Bosphorus at its narrowest point. (6)

Constantine spent the winter of 1453 making frantic appeals to the Pope and the Italian naval powers to save him. Venice and Genoa could have done much more, but they did not realize the danger to their Eastern trade. Giovanni Guistiniani brought two galleys and 300 men. Venice commissioned the bailiff at its factory at Galata to arm such able-bodied Venetians as were with him for the protection of the city..."Either Genoa or Venice could have thrown a hundred galleys and twenty thousand men into the scale if they had chosen." Nicholas V was willing enough to help. But all that the Pope could send was a Cardinal, a moderate sum of money, and a few hundred soldiers of fortune hastily hired in Italy. (7)

John returned from his travels in Italy and Hungary at the beginning of November 1424. The Catholic King of Hungary had advised him that his chances of securing aid from western Christendom would be better if he and his people would swear obedience to the Pope in Rome. (5)

At a council in September, 1439 in Florence, John "reminded the Pope that he had promised to send at least two warships for the defense of Constantinople by the end of spring, because there were ominous signs that the Sultan was preparing a great offensive." Nothing came of his request. (5)

The Pope called for a Crusade, in 1440, against Byzantium's enemies after a Danubian fortress had surrendered in 1439 to the Turks. Belgrade still held but the rest of northern Serbia was under Turkish control. In 1441 the Sultan's army crossed into Transylvania. Hungary would be next. (6)

In June of 1439 a union of the Greek and Latin churches (Orthodox and Catholic) was achieved. (5)

The Turks failed to capture Belgrade in 1440. The Pope called for a crusade. It was to be led by King Vladislav of Poland and Hungary, while troops recruited by the Pope in the West were commanded by Cardinal Julian Cesarini. In 1444 the force reached Varna, on the Black Sea, and was attacked by the Turks. The Crusaders fled, and King Vladislav and Cardinal Cesarini were killed. In 1448, another Hungarian force was defeated, on the plain of Kossovo. It was the final Western attempt to support the dying empire. (9)

Constantine appealed to Pope Nicholas V for aid and the result was the last temporary union of the two churches in 1452, which divided the Greeks at a vital time in their history. (12)

The Hungarians, together with the Serbs under George Brankovich, formed the bulk of the Pope's Crusade in 1441. Ladislas (the king of Hungary and Poland) was named the leader, and a Hungarian general, the brilliant John Hunyadi, (Leader) of Transylvania, was given the supreme command. Organization was given to Cardinal Guiliano Cesarini. The fleet was to be provided by the Venetians, the Duke of Burgundy and the Pope, and sail to the Black Sea, then up the Danube if necessary to meet the army. (6)

Constantine rallied to the defense of the capital a force comprising all the city's able-bodied inhabitants. "But of these 5,000 Byzantines and 2,000 foreigners, only a small proportion were professional military men. The foreigners were mostly Venetian and Genoese, the latter under the command of the brilliant Giovanni Guistiniani Longo. The defenders were well armed with javelins, arrows, muskets and mangonels for casting stones, but they faced a force at least 80,000 strong." (9)

In 1423 the outlook was dismal. The city of Thessalonica was under siege by the Turks. During the summer the Byzantines offered Thessalonica to the Venetians; and in September the city changed hands and became the largest and the most lucrative of all the Venetian colonies in Greece, only to fall to the Turks in 1431. (5)

An important meeting of the Venetian senate was held in Venice in 1453. The doge, Francesco Foscari was opposed to sending aid, because a proposed marriage between Constantine and his daughter had been agreed to when Constantine was only the ruler of Morea. Once he had become emperor the marriage was canceled, and when the doge insisted on the marriage he became Byzantine's enemy. (5)

The defenders watched for the Venetian fleet in May of 1453. They "searched the

enemy-infested seas of the archipelago; sailed north and far to the west, but in vain. Byzantine would receive no help from the west." (4)

May 29, 1453 -- As waves of Turks poured into Constantinople, the Emperor Constantine fell fighting and a Venetian fleet, "detained first by the long discussions in the senate and then by a wind, waited while the city was systematically looted, street by street and house by house...and then seeing that no more could be done, turned round and sailed for home. (2)

In Feb. 1453, the Venetian senate realized the seriousness of the situation and voted to send 2 transports, with 400 men each and 15 ships to follow. March 2 it was still being discussed. They didn't leave until April 20. (6)

The next months [from December 1452] every foreigner was anxious to escape while opportunity allowed...The Venetians, more concerned for their merchandise than for Constantinople, agreed to a reluctant compromise. Three galleys and two light vessels would stay. The rest left. (2)

" February 26, 1453 Pier Duranzo slipped out of Constantinople harbor by night, bound for Venice. The same night also saw the escape of six Candian vessels, homebound with a cargo of cloth goods. A number of important personages escaped along with them, about seven hundred in all.' " (2)

For the Byzantine Emperor, "the disaster at Varna meant the end of all his work, failure of his diplomacy, the end of his hopes. The emperor, as a vassal of the Sultan, was forced to welcome him home and congratulate him on his victory." (6)

Constantine spent the next two years repairing the damage to the city done by the new artillery, in 1446, while the Sultan attacked John Hunyadi, now Regent of Hungary. Hunyadi was ready for him and marched out to join forces with the Albanian Scanderbeg. But Scanderbeg was busy fighting the Venetians, so, Hunyadi faced the Sultan alone and was defeated at Kosovo in 1448. Hunyadi escaped, only to be caught by his former ally George Brankovich, now a faithful vassal of the Sultan, who held him until he agreed to pay for damage caused by his army in Serbia. (7)

Girolamo Minotto, a leader of the Venetian colony in the city, promised every support and regularly assured the emperor a relief expedition was on the way. He had requested one in February, 1453. May 3-23 a small boat sailed, looking for the fleet. On May 23 they reported the Venetian fleet was nowhere in sight. (6)

John VII went to Venice and got promises of assistance, to Paris where Charles promised to give [him] French reinforcements. Manuel visited King Henry IV of England (December 1400) where he was promised substantial help, which did not materialize. (3)

[John VII] endeavored to sell his claim to the imperial crown of Byzantium to the King of France. [1398] (3)

(April, 1453) 79 Turkish ships were anchored in the Golden Horn! A Venetian sailor, had a plan: a surprise attack on the Turkish fleet. But two Genoese arrived from Galata with a message:.. "Delay this expedition for a few days and we shall be able to add our forces to yours." The offer was accepted but when the attack went forward the Turks were ready! They had been warned! "In fact the Genoese of Galata had lost no time in betraying their co-religionists." (4)

Altogether the Franks, counting both trained mercenaries and armed burghers, were not more than three thousand strong. Yet either Genoa or Venice could have thrown a hundred galleys and twenty thousand men into the scale if they had chosen." 1453 (7)

"John Guistiniani was an outstanding man. This Genoese nobleman had rushed to the threatened town. (1452) Energetic, bold, intelligent, he had a great reputation in the Christian world. More than once during the siege he was to withhold victory from the Turks....If many of his troops were of poor quality, he had 700 of his own Genoese: 300 sailors and 400 soldiers dressed in iron." (4)

The impoverishment of the Empire reached into the palace... "Table service was no longer of gold and silver but of lead and earthenware. The gems...had been replaced by glass. The Great Palace had long since been abandoned and was falling into ruins....The diminished revenue made it impossible to balance the budget. [The emperor attempted to tax foreign grain but the Genoese collected 87 per cent of the customs duties on the Bosporus and fiercely resisted any infringement on their monopolies." This had led to a short war between Constantine and Genoa 100 years before, [won by Genoa.] (3)

"Who knew the quantities of money and the many promises our emperor gave and sent to the lords...by way of Galata in order to receive some soldiers, who never came." (1453) "Who knew that the Catalan king requested possession of Lemnos in order to defend against the Turks by sea and to assist the City when the need arose? He was given Lemnos." 1453 (11)

"Four ships from Genoa managed to slip through [April, 1453]." (2)

(1395)"Bayazid...invaded the Peloponnese, established direct rule over most of Danubian Bulgaria and extended authority over Wallachia. The Pope preached a crusade, and King Sigismund of Hungary led a host of Latin knights into Danubian Bulgaria. Wallachia joined them." The Crusaders were soon camped outside Nicopolis on the southern bank of the Danube. Bayazid, who had been attacking Constantinople, marched north, and when Sigismund saw him he suggested that Vlach and Hungarian infantry attack the Turks and that the knights from Europe form the second line. "The Latin knights rejected this proposal as an affront and, their rich armor glittering, rode full-tilt at the foe." They overwhelmed the Ottoman front line, moved forward, were surrounded and surrendered. The Vlach retreated across the Danube and the Hungarians fled at "the sudden appearance of the Sultan's Serbian vassals." [1398] (3)

25,000 Crusaders set off in 1443 and destroyed Turkish forces outside the Serbian city of Nish, then marched into Bulgaria where Sofia surrendered to them just before Christmas. The Sultan was worried. The crusade seemed to be winning and he also had problems in Anatolia where an uprising was occurring, and in Albania where George Kastriotes the famous Scanderbeg had revolted. Constantine had occupied Athens and Thebes and forced the Duke to pay him the tribute that he had been giving the Sultan. (6)

"When Ladislas (Vladislav) of Poland campaigned against the Turks but lost at Varna in 1444, Emperor John only watched. "He was too cautious to stir a finger to aid the Hungarians, for he knew that if he once offended the Sultan his days would be numbered... John passed away in 1448 and Sultan Murad died in 1451." (7)

In June 1444, ambassadors from King Ladislas, George Brankovich and John Hunyadi were received at the Sultan's court in Adrianople and signed a 10 year truce so that the Sultan was free to deal with his other problems. George Brankovich got Serbian territories back. But the Pope was angry. Hunyadi's victories and the promise of additional help from Venice made him think they could get rid of the Turks forever and he forced the Crusaders to continue their fight. (6)

Eleven days after the defeat at Kosovo, Constantine became the Emperor (his brother died childless). John VIII had 5 brothers (two had died). The other three fought over the throne even though Constantine had been selected by John. Constantine traveled to Constantinople in a Venetian ship. (6)

"In Rome what measures were taken by the Church to prevent our downfall?Š The emperor consented to have the Pope's name commemorated in our services [November 12, 1452]. Six months later we had received as much aid from Rome as had been sent to us by the sultan of Cairo [none]." (11)

George Brankovich followed the 1444 truce, but Ladislas decided to do as the Pope ordered and started off across Bulgaria toward the Black Sea near Varna where he expected to meet the Venetian fleet. However, the fleet was fighting the Sultan who, upon hearing the truce had ended, hurried up the Black Sea coast and on Nov. 10, 1444 attacked the Crusader army. Ladislas and Cesarini died. Only John Hunyadi escaped. This was the last Crusade ever to be launched against the Turks in Europe. (6)

George Sphrantzes, in 1444 became ambassador to Murad II and on the death of John VIII in 1448 "traveled to Murad and submitted for approval the selection of Constantine XI as emperor of Constantinople" (11)

Constantine was looking for a wife: either a Portuguese princess, the niece of King Alfonso of Aragon and Naples, or two others. While George Sphrantzes was trying to arrange a marriage, Sultan Murad II died. His widow, Maria, the daughter of George Brankovich and the stepmother of the new Sultan Mehmed was now available. Sphrantzes went to Brankovich and asked him for Maria's hand. He agreed, but Maria said no and she won. "Constantine never did find a new wife before he died." (6)

Constantine announced: " 'It is not in my power nor in the power of anyone here to surrender this city.' " (4)

"Constantine Palaiologos was the last Emperor of Constantinople, the New Rome. He was killed defending his city against the Ottoman Turks in 1453..." (5)

"The great Turkish gun, the Basilic, when into action for the first time on April 12, 1453. This monster nicknamed 'the Royal One' needed one hundred pairs of oxen to drag it, 100 men were in attendance on each side to support it, 200 workers flattened the road for it and 50 carpenters were ready....Its barrel was three feet in diameter and it fired projectiles weighing 1,500 lb.... [practice shot] was heard 13 miles away and the projectile made a crater six feet deep. This great gun had been made by a turncoat Hungarian Christian called Orban, or Urban, formerly in the service of Byzantium [who could no longer afford him]. " (4)

Eyewitness account (Nick Barbaro, a Venetian and a surgeon.) " 'In March, 1452, the Turk Mohammed began the construction of a formidable castle, six miles from Constantinople on the way to the mouth of the Black Sea. It had fourteen towers...Work proceeded steadily on the castle through the month of August 1452 and its sole purpose was the taking of Constantinople....The first shot fired by the great cannon of the castle sank a ship...carrying a cargo of provisions for the relief of Constantinople, and the date was November 26, 1452.' " (2)

"Although it was possible for the despot of Serbia to send money secretly from many places and men, did anyone see a single penny? On the contrary, they provided huge financial aid and many men to the sultan." [1453] (11)

In **1373** the Emperor acknowledged himself the vassal of Murad when the Ottomans conquered the Serbs and Bulgarians. [In 1387 Murad's troops took Sofia then met rebellious Serbs, Bosnians, Bulgars and Albanians at Kossovo in 1389. Murad died but his son Bayazid rallied and won a crushing victory.]

"Rumors persisted that help was imminent. Why not negotiate? So one day he sent an emissary to Constantine XI with favourable terms. If Byzantium surrendered, no harm would befall its citizens. They would be free to come and go and they would retain their possessions. Constantine...could be King of the Peloponnese." 1452 (4)

Mahomet (Mehmed) II, a young man of 23, cold, stubborn and ambitious, had sworn to take the city. On the day after he came to power he had his younger brother drowned in order to eliminate a possible rival. (4)

With a complete disregard for treaties, he had already built a formidable castle fortress on the Greek shore of the Bosphorus... with the object of preventing Byzantium from getting provisions by sea. On November 26, 1452, a Venetian ship laden with barley had tried to force a way through. The owner of the ship was captured and impaled on a stake 14 days

later. (4)

Manuel II, however, appealed to Christian princes to save his sacred city. Finally, in 1399, a small fleet bearing Marshal Boucicaut over a thousand men from France, Genoa, Venice, Rhodes and Lesbos anchored in the Golden Horn. Manuel cleared the suburbs of Turks, defeated a Turkish squadron and reprovisioned the city.

In 1422 the Ottomans attacked Constantinople using cannon for the first time. But they were pushed back. (3)

"So diminished was the city of New Rome [1432] that ruins abounded. Vacant houses were used as firewood, and large areas were now copses, orchards, gardens and tilled soil." (3)

"John VIII had neither land nor gold with which to purchase Western aid." (3)

Back

Teacher notes

Goal:

Students will understand that events of 500 years ago still have ramifications in actions and reactions in today's world.
Students will understand some forces which cause decisions to be made by leaders of various areas can affect the entire known world.
Students will analyze the relationships, during the 15th Century, between neighboring countries with conflicting ideologies and rivalries, and make connections to the present.
Students will analyze the role of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires on the area of the World (Balkans) they both once controlled, and how outside pressures can change territorial boundaries.

Length:

Research and group activities may take about 300-400 minutes depending on the number of computers connected to the Internet. One Computer classrooms will take longer unless you have WebWhacker, or the teacher downloads and copies the website pages in advance of the lesson.

Testimony/presentations should take about one class period and be limited to 5-10 minutes for each group, with one additional class period for rebuttal/questions.

Materials: See materials list above.

Duplicate enough copies of the dossier pages for at least 2 copies for each group, and one copy per student of the letter from the insurance company, the introduction page, Constantine XI's final speech. the Short History Sheet and the Volcano sheet. (Also the website pages, 1-2 per group)

Suggestions:

Hand out highlighters to each group to highlight the dossiers.

Reprint the questions to be answered to keep the students on task.

Appoint a person to quickly start the timeline on butcher paper (title, lines, etc.). As soon as each group has found and written up five facts, have them put on the paper. It now becomes a resource.

Print up **(in color if possible)** the maps as samples from **Maps of Central**

Europe 980-1871 - Great Historical Maps of England, France, Hungary, Venice, Genoa, Serbia. http://www.lib.utexas.edu/ Libs/ PCL/ Map_collection /historical/Central_Europe.html **and Maps of South Eastern Europe** - Great Historical Maps of Serbia, Hungary, Venice, Danube Area, Moldavia, Genoese territory, Croatia, Wallachia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Ottoman Empire, Byzantine Empire, Varna, Thessalonika, Transylvania. http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/historical/se_europe.html **--If you print them from the website (sideways) on 11 x 14 paper you'll get large maps for the kids to see. Or copy them to your desktop and print from there on 8 1/2 by 11 sideways (smaller map results).**

Invite the Principal and Assistant Principal and/or parents to be the members of the tribunal.

Tape one student representing Sophia, who states the charges (reasons for the lawsuit), Play the tape at the beginning of the testimony (direct from Moscow).

Play the song "Istanbul was Constantinople..." at the start of the hearing and at the end.

Help the groups, if asked, by insisting they find out what the competition is doing.

If you have a world map in your classroom, cover all but the area in dispute (no North or South America) and label it "World, 1473". This helps to set the scene.

Tape the presentation on video to replay.

Modifications:

France and England were not truly important to this historical event. If you need to drop a group or groups, these are the two least important to the unit. Those countries can become part of an extension/extra credit unit along with Albania who is also mentioned in the texts of the dossier pages. People who have trouble staying on task in a group can be assigned to do research on Dracula, or national heroes like Janos Hunyadi or George Brankovich and then present these reports as eyewitnesses or as a media interview between testimony.

Resources for teachers: See resources and bibliography above.

Additional notes for teachers:

Constantinople was surrounded on all sides by walls: a triple wall to the west and single walls along the water. The walls along the east and south of the city were bombarded by cannon from the Ottoman ships. The western walls were tunneled under, attacked by cannon and attacked by men. These walls held up.

The entrance to the Golden Horn (to the north of the city) was protected by a huge forged iron chain which ran from Galata (a city held by Genoa after a disasterous war with the Byzantines) to Constantinople. Access to the Golden Horn was restricted and no Turkish battle ships could enter to attack the northern walls.

Mehmed II decided to bypass the chain by dragging 79 ships around Galata. He ordered trees cut down and laid in a double track, end to end, then greased. The ships were dragged down the track around Galata and into the Golden Horn, appearing one morning in April, 1453, to the consternation of the Byzantines.

Added question sheet:

Questions you need to be able to answer:

1. What happened to Constantinople?

    What did it look like? Did it change from 1380 to 1453?
    Where was Galata?
    Who owned Galata?
    Where is the Golden Horn? Where was the chain located and why was it there?
    Who were the Ottomans and where did they come from?
    Who was your leader in 1453?
    Who was your leader in 1472?

2. Were you involved in or did either battle of Kossovo effect you? In what way(s)?

3. Were you involved in or did the battle of Varna effect you? In what way(s)?

4. Did the invention (use) of gun powder have any role in the downfall of the Byzantine empire (Constantinople)?

5. What was really lost in 1453?

(**Everyone** answers the next questions **but the Ottomans who turn the questions around to oppose the other sides** [the Byzantines only answer if a B appears after the question mark])

6. Did you help the Byzantine empire at any time between 1380 and 1453? (B)

7. Did you participate in any battles against the Ottoman Turks between 1380 and 1448? If so, did you lose? Did you ever make a peace treaty with the Ottomans? (B)

8. How close to you, or land that you owned, were the Turks during the period 1380 to 1453? Did they get closer over time?

9. Were you in danger from the Turks? Are you in danger now? (1472) Have you been taken over by the Turks? (Can you show this information on a map?)

10. Did you have an economic interest in the Byzantine Empire or Constantinople? Did its fall effect your income? trade? ability to get goods? Would you be willing to spend money to find a way to get goods from India and China without going through the Ottoman held areas including Constantinople?

11. Did you lose or gain land during the period 1380 to 1453? (can you show this on a map?)

12. Did you have a religious interest in the Byzantine Empire? What was it?

13. **Byzantines**: Did you ever ask for help between 1380 and 1453? Did you get any? Was it effective? Who helped you and were you satisfied with the help? Who do you mainly blame for the disaster?

Everyone should know the key players!!

Who is: George Brankovich, Hunyadi, Dracula, Constantine XI, Mehmed (Mohammed) II, Pope Nicholas V, Scanderbeg, Doge of Venice, King of Poland and Hungary?

Who do you think should be responsible for the loss of the city and the empire?

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